NAQCC News

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1. MARCH CHALLENGE: Our second alphabet challenge this year has a theme we've not used before. Our challenge manager Tom WY3H thought that since this is the month we (most of us) change our clocks to observe daylight savings time, we'd have a challenge dealing with terms relating to time. (Note: DST is really a misnomer. No daylight is 'saved' or added, just taken from the morning and given to the evening. As a wise American Indian observed - it's like trying to make a blanket longer by cutting off one end and sewing it on the other end.) Anyway back on track. Our February challenge has been a great success so far with our new rules of no contest/sprint QSO's allowed and allowing use of all letters in a call even if some are duplicate letters. That is you can get 8 W's from W3WWW, not just 2 as previously. Those changes are permanent and this is the last time we'll mention them in a newsletter. There were a total of 82 letters in the February challenge words, and that turned out to be just about right from the reports we've gotten so far. There are just 70 in the March words, so it should be a bit easier, but still challenging. We'd love to have you try your hand (fist?) in one of our challenges if you haven't done so before. They are a great encouragement for you to be more active on CW and help preserve and promote use of this wonderful ham radio mode.

I think that sums it up, but always check the complete challenge rules pages here before embarking on a challenge.

2. FEBRUARY SPRINT RESULTS: We get so many emails regarding our wonderful sprints, and every one of them is positive. I wish we could share them all with you, but due to space limitations we just can't. However we thank each and every one of you for your kind comments. Although we can't share them all, every now and then we like to pick one or two at random and present them here. I think this one from Dave W4ISI is very representative of the comments we get from

newcomers to our sprints.

Dave emails, "I had to drop you a note about the NAQCC sprint of Feb. 9. My friend AF4LB kept bugging me to get on and try the sprint. I never heard such a pileup except for chasing a rare DX station. It was a fantastic evening with my Bencher key and 3 watts. I had a ball, and will be back in the next one. Been a ham for 33 years and still loving CW more and more."

Also from Cory N7FV after I notified him about an error in his log, "John: Thanks for the correction. I wondered if that was the case. The NAQCC is a great organization by the way. I listened on the last sprint and couldnt hear anything as conditions were poor in UT. I found the sprint fun and enjoyable as I am just starting out with CW. Only been using it since Jan 1 2011"

Now if you've been hesitant about entering our sprints for the first time, I think that should convince you to come on in and join the fun and excitement. It also serves to illustrate that even though conditions vary from sprint to sprint and location to location, everyone seems to enjoy our sprints.

Without further ado, let's get to the results after a brief comment. This was #11 in a row that we topped the 100 logs mark. 118 logs was our 5th highest total.

We came close to breaking our 80M QSOs record for the second month in a row. Otherwise it looks like about 2/3 of the stats were up from January.

Stats	Current Month	Previous Month	All-Time Record	Mo/Yr
Logs	118	107	135	8/10
Participants	169	182	211	8/10
Total QSO's	1657	1610	1929	8/10
Hour 1 QSO's	901	819	1028	8/10
Hour 2 QSO's	756	791	921	6/10
20M QSO's	0	2	1000	6/10
40M QSO's	735	681	1277	8/10
80M QSO's	922	927	927	1/11
Avg QSO's per stn	14.0	15.0	19.1	9/06

AWARDS	
SWA Category	
Division	**Winner**
W1	KB1PBA
W2	KA2KGP
W3	KB3AAG
W4	K4BAI
W5	K5JX
W6	N6DIT
W7	NX1P
W8	N8BB

W9	W9HLY
W0	KD0V
Canada	VE3KI
DX	NP3CW
Other Categories	
Gain	K1ZZI
First time entrant high scorer	W7FB

Congratulations to all including winners and non-winners. Everyone who participated and sent in a log is a winner because you have helped show the ham radio world that there are many folks still using and enjoying CW on the ham bands. That's one of our main goals here at the NAQCC.

Very special thanks to those who reported their results even though they made only a few QSO's. Your reports are important also.

We had a total of 11 stations who didn't submit a log show up 5-35(!) times in the 118 logs we received and cross-checked. Hopefully they and many others will be back next month AND submit a log. Remember submitting a log doubles the strength of your statement that you support CW operation.

We welcome these hams who submitted a sprint log for the first time. We hope they will continue to participate and report their results:
W7FB NX1P AE5VB AA2YK W4JVY WS4P AB7MP W0LGU N0OKS N7FV

GOLDEN LOGS. Everyone who submits a log with exactly the correct format as defined in the rules plus has every bit of info (numbers, states, etc.) correct in the log gets a listing in the GOLDEN LOGS section in the results. Many clubs penalize mistakes in logging, some to the point of disqualification if there are too many mistakes. We don't do anything like that other than fixing a score if a mistake changes it. Instead of penalizing errors, we will reward perfection.

There also is going to be a prize awarded to the one who has the most GOLDEN LOGS each year. We have yet to decide on the prize but the winner for 2010 is definitely Art WB8ENE who has been perfect each month since we started the GOLDEN LOG feature back in March 2010.

We hope that is an incentive to run a fine-tooth comb through your logs before submitting them.

GOLDEN LOG's were submitted by 45 participants this month. To see if you're one of them, check the results page.

212 different hams have submitted at least one GOLDEN LOG since we started keeping track in March 2010. Here's a Top 5 (+ ties) list of most GOLDEN LOG's:
WB8ENE - 12 (all)
N8XMS - 10
K0HJC - 8
KB1PBA - 8
KD5MMM - 8
KU4A - 8

Thanks to all GOLDEN LOGgers for making my cross-checking job that much easier.

Full sprint info here.

3. GENERAL CLUB NEWS:

- From Gary K1YAN: "Two new awards will be available beginning March 1.

First is the WAVE award, which will be given for contacts with eight Canadian provinces. Endorsements for completing the award on a single band or using QRPp power levels will be issued. In addition, a one time endorsement for contacting either Northwest Territories, Yukon or Nunavut is available. Join the race for certificate number one !!

Second is the Capital Cities Grid Squares award which will be given for contacts with stations in the grid square in which the state capital cities are located. There are two levels of accomplishment, one for all 50 states and the one for the 48 continental states. Endorsements for single band, QRPp power and 2X QRP and 2X QRPp will be issued.

The maidenhead grid locator, grid square, or simply grid started as a VHF/UHF concept. A grid square is designated by either a four or six character label. The six character label is a much more precise locator and is not needed for our purposes. The four character locator is two letters followed by two numbers, for example FN42. For those who are HF operators and not familiar with the idea, think of it like this :

Cover a map with chess boards. Give each individual chess board a two letter label. Number each square on all the boards. Start numbering at one on each new board. We can now locate any place on the map by using the letter name of the board and the number of the square on that board. Our locator of FN42 would be chess board FN and square 42 on that board. In the real world we use lines of longitude and latitude to form our chess boards and squares.

To find your grid square check QRZ.com (your call listing under Detail), or one of the numerous internet references. Many logging programs will give you your grid if you know your latitude and longitude. If you fall in a capital square please let your contacts know. Happy hunting!!

For those of the " wee signal " persuasion, don't forget that the WAS award now has a QRPp, continental 48 category.

- We received this sad news from Dennis N7HRO (#2181), "Hi Folks. I just got back from Butler, MO where I visited Roy Jones, W5RJ. He is in very bad shape and being cared for by hospice. I drove over from Wheatland, WY last Wednesday and home Saturday. A very long drive by yourself. Thank goodness for the OMISS party. There were lots of OMISS folks on to talk with. I managed to get his station set up in the living room where his wife can bring the table to his recliner to work some CW. He can't hear voice that well but he can still pick out CW. I will work up an article for the newsletter and I will send some pictures with it. It will take a little while for me to get information from his wife. She is also going to try to get me some of his military pictures. He is a Korean War Vet. A bit older than I am being a Viet Nam Vet. Please keep Roy and his wife Marion in your prayers, Dennis Cornell."

Roy served as one of our newsletter emailers until we went to our on-line mail list server and always did a wonderful job for us. All of us at the NAQCC wish him well. We wiil publish the additional info from Dennis in an upcoming newsletter.

- As we mentioned in a previous newsletter, another of our former officers Fred KC8FS has also been having health problems. We've received bits and pieces of info about him, and even a couple

emails from Fred himself. He has good days and bad. He is well enough on the good ones to be sending emails, but still facing a stiff battle. Jim W8JFB (#2759) sends this address along if you wish to send Fred a get well card. Fred Soper, POB 94, Mosherville, MI 49258. Use this address, not the one listed in QRZ. He is still weak from all the treatments and tests, and Jim suggests it is better to send a card rather than any emails.

- Thanks to the over 120 of you who have voted in our poll. We're going to leave it up a few more days yet, then come up with another one. I had hoped some of you would come up with ideas for a poll question, but we haven't received any yet. If you did send one, and haven't heard from us, please send again to **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET**. Sometimes emails go astray. For now, a poll question should be one that lends itself to just one answer. Example: What is your favorite QRP/CW band?, NOT On which bands do you operate QRP?

- Every time we do an emailing on our mail list, we get several bounce notifications and our mail list host removes a member after 3 consecutive bounces. If you haven't been receiving our emails which contain urgent news items that can't wait K6rf till the next newsletter, last minute reminders of our sprints, and up to date info on our CW QRS nets, please be sure you have a good email address on file with us. Just email us at **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET** with the good address, your call, and NAQCC number in the body of the email.

- Mike KC2EGL and I get together in person about once a month for various ham radio, astronomy, and other projects. During our last visit we also did some work on our NAQCC prizes. As you probably know, Mike is our NAQCC Prize Manager. We tied up some loose ends, and if you have won a prize in the past few months, you should be receiving it within the next two weeks or so. If you have any questions about prizes, contact Mike at **KC2EGLMJB@YAHOO.COM**

- Just a quick reminder we're continuing with the hidden call sign idea originally suggested by Bill KB3XS. Somewhere in this newsletter is a call sign of a member in a place that is definitely out of context and containing a mix of upper and lower case letters. If it is YOUR call sign and YOU find it, email **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET** BEFORE the publication date of the next newsletter (March 12) and win a gift certificate for 100 NAQCC QSL cards produced by the CheapQSLs.com company run by Hal K6RF (#0171) and donated by the NAQCC thanks to your generous monetary donations to the club. Cheap refers only to the price of the cards, NOT the quality which is superb. So far we've had 40 hidden calls and only 7 'eagle-eyed' winners - KD1R, KM6NN, K4UK, K5RIX, N9AKF, W1ICU, N4OLN.

3a. CHAPTER NEWS:

Here is where our club chapters present news about their chapter activities. We currently have three chapters - European, Minnesota, and Texas. We're looking forward to expanding that roster. Chapters are more or less independent local gatherings organized by members in a geographical area and subject to a list of guidelines under the auspices of the NAQCC. If you would be interested in starting a chapter in your area, let us know and we'll send a copy of the guidelines.

EUROPEAN CHAPTER:

Items in this section are from EU Chapter President Matt MW3YMY unless otherwise credited.
Questions or comments should go to **MATT@MATTIRELAND.CO.UK**
The EU Chapter web site is at http://www.naqcc-eu.org/

MINNESOTA CHAPTER:

pix_sm_wd0k (9K)

The chapter was founded by Bob K9OSC (L).
Questions or comments should go to Chapter President Rich WD0K at pix_email_wd0k .
The MN Chapter web site is at http://www.naqccmn.com/
Items in this section are from Keith K0HJC (R) unless otherwise credited.

Greetings from the Minnesota Chapter, and special greetings to the Texas Chapter! We look forward to many contacts along our north-south pipeline!

On February 5th, KD0V, #2002 and KA0RJY, #3894 worked the FYBO field day from the ice on Clear Lake in Waseca, MN, while K9OSC, #3894 worked QRP in the Minnesota QSO Party, logging 120 contacts.

For those who think that QRP CW is only best suited for our relatively benign monthly two hour sprints, think again. QRP is a competitive class for most contests and a great deal of satisfaction can be derived from participating on the grand stage. This year Bob, K9OSC jumped into the MN QSO Party. Using his K3 and running five watts along with simple wire antennas (CF Zepp and ground mounted vertical), he made 120 contacts in 17 MN counties, 31 states and three Canadian provinces. He was only able to work six hours out of a possible ten hour contesting period. He used the GENLOG logging program along with its keyboard CW function.

Bob's bands of choice were 80, 40 and 20 meters with 40 meters being the most productive. Conditions were only average but he was able to hold a frequency when calling CQ. When changing bands he said he sometimes felt like DX as the pack would descend on him seeking a new multiplier. Working challenging pileups for rare MN counties was particularly satisfying. Knowing when and where to call was all important. Tuning to the last station's frequency, knowing that the other station would be listening there, let Bob beat out other QRO stations.

The most important part of contesting is listening and taking what you can at the right moment. This meant waiting patiently for the right time to call, which sometimes felt like an excruciatingly long period of time. Having good CW copying and sending skills is equally important. There is immense satisfaction operating QRP in a contest of this kind. The QRO stations are everywhere but the pesky little QRP station can easily hold his own and compete with skill and tenacity.

Merlin, KD0V, sent along some black and white photos of himself and Reg, KA0RJY, #3877, operating QRP portable on the ice of Clear Lake at Waseca, MN for the Freeze Your Butt Off winter field day exercise. FYBO is sponsored by the Arizona ScQRPions QRP Club. Operations are to be field day portable, using battery or non-commercial power and QRP. Multipliers are based upon the temperature at the operating position. With a temperature of 28 degrees, the group's multiplier was five. Several members of Merlin's Thursday code class stopped by, together with two sheriff's Deputies who were doing ice house checks. Fortunately they recognized Rich, KD0ELY from a Triathalon the local club had worked last August. Four contacts were made before the participants decided to shut down before FYBO came true.

Merlin is in the hooded stocking cap, taking turns with Reg on Merlin's K-2 and Buddipole. Gerry, KC0KOU is in the background. And that is Rich, KD0ELY, trying to warm himself with the handheld. Plans are already in the works for next winter, hoping for more sunspots and a higher multiplier!

In other chapter news, WD0K and K0HJC are working on audio filter kits and KD0V's code class attendees are showing improvement in their CW skills. Our Friday after sprint brunch was attended by: WD0K and spouse K0MLT, K0KCY and spouse N0HCJ, K9OSC and spouse Betty, K0HJC and spouse Judy, KD0V and W0LGU. (KA0RJY and KA8HDE had to work). Our next get-together was planned for Saturday, February 19th at the Bonanza Steak House in St. Cloud, Minnesota, after the St. Cloud Hamfest.

Visit the Minnesota Chapter Website at http://www.naqccmn.com/ for more details of our activities, plus photos and rag-chew times.

TEXAS CHAPTER:

Items in this section are from TX Chapter Director Ron K5DUZ unless otherwise credited.
Questions or comments should go to **WEBMASTER7388@NAQCCTX.COM**
The TX Chapter web site is at http://www.naqcctx.com/

Our website http://www.naqcctx.com/ is now being updated on a weekly basis. There is a note on the first page showing the last change date. As a reminder, all 310 NAQCC members residing in Texas are automatically members of the Texas Chapter.

Allen, KA5TJS (NCS of the East Texas QRS CW Net) is reporting each week's net check-ins in the "Activities" section of our website. QRM has been present on the net freq. of 3562.5 KHz the past few weeks so he has been forced to QSY up a KHz or so. Please be sure to accurately zero beat KA5TJS as he has been using his rig's sharp filters. 80m conditions have been good for the net. Allen has been enjoying the ET QRS Net activity, so make a note to join him each Monday

evening!

We still need an alternate NCS for those occasions when Allen is unavailable. If you would like to volunteer for this prestigious job, please e-mail Allen at his e-mail address listed on the "contacts" page of our website.

We are now reporting the monthly NAQCC Sprint results for Texas stations on our website. Seven Texas stations reported their results for the Feb. 8th Sprint with K5JX taking top Texas honors. The next Sprint is March 16th (Texas time) so mark your calendar for two hours of great fun!

We need volunteers to "Elmer" local hams and prospective hams. Please send us your interests and contact information. Until next time, enjoy the first days of spring weather and support your Texas Chapter of the NAQCC by being active with QRP CW!

4. THE NAQCC QRS Nets:

The NAQCC QRS Net Manager is Brian WB9TPA who will handle all Net related material at this email address: pix email wb9tpa (1K)

Now our NAQCC QRS Nets schedule and recent activity report:

NAQCC QRS Net (Main)

Schedule: Sunday evenings local time which is Monday 0000Z on 3562.5 kHz.

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Date(UTC)   NCS         Participants
02/07/11 K3WWP  6 - K3WWP WY3H N2COD KJ4AOM KI4NEC WS4P (Super Bowl Nite)
02/14/11 WB9TPA 6 - WB9TPA K1IEE N8IUP W8BI N9AWP KB3ENV
02/21/11 WB9TPA 0 - No net due to severe weather and S9 noise level.
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NAQCC ET QRS Net (East Texas)

Monday evenings local time which is Tuesday 0100Z on 3562.5 kHz.

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Date(UTC)   NCS         Participants
02/08/11 KA5TJS 3 - KA5TJS KE9DR N5YYX
02/15/11 KA5TJS 3 - KA5TJS KC2EE W5KCM
02/22/11 KA5TJS 3 - KA5TJS KE5YGR KE9DR
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NAQCC PNW QRS Net (Pacific NorthWest

Schedule: Thursday evenings local time which is Friday 0200Z on 3575 kHz.

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Date(UTC)   NCS         Participants
02/04/11 KE7LKW 5 - KE7LKW K7ALG K7ZNP KA6AIL N7BO
02/11/11 K7ZNP  7 - K7ZNP KE7LKW K7ALG KA6AIL N6GND N6VOH N6KIX
02/18/11 KE7LKW 9 - K7ZNP KE7LKW K7ALG KA6AIL N6GND N6KIX NU7T NX1P K7ZI
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For more net info, see the Elmer Project / QRS Nets section of the web site.

4a. THE NAQCC ELMER PROJECT:

The Elmer project is coordinated by Ron K5DUZ. If you are interested in helping out or need help with any CW and/or QRP matters contact:
K5DUZ - **NAQCCSKED@FLASH.NET**

Elmering activity was a bit slow, with only one opportunity to assist a future CW addict with his CW learning. He was using the Farnsworth method, but with a word speed that was too slow. He has since switched to the Koch method and is now making good progress. My first boss once told me "Experience is knowing a lot of things that don't work." That statement pretty much describes the basis of my CW knowledge. If you are having a problem learning Morse/CW, I can probably tell you what you are doing wrong because I've made that same mistake. Learning CW should be fun. If it seems too much like work I may be able to help you!

Now back to our discussion of learning and becoming proficient with Morse/CW.
Last time I discussed relearning CW by learning to copy the unique character sounds as a way of bypassing the so called "ten wpm barrier" that many beginning CW hams encounter when they use the "dit/dah look up table" method. Now I'll tell you about how I did this almost fifty years ago, even though at the time I didn't realize the significance of it.

Because I was attending college during most of my one year Novice license term, my CW proficiency wasn't sufficient to copy the 13 wpm required for the General Class test. I just happened to mention my predicament to a friend of mine and he loaned me a set of U.S. Navy code practice records. These were 15 wpm, 5 letter code group records, with all letters / numbers / punctuation / prosigns used. The first few sessions were discouraging as 15 wpm seemed so much faster than what I was used to. However, I could copy a few of the letters such as "C" and "Q". Gee, I wonder why I was so familiar with them? Anyway, my brain seemed to begin "frying" if I listened to the records for more than five minutes at a time. I would listen four or five times per day. After about a week, I was copying more of the letters, mostly the longer ones such as "P", "J", etc. and I think this was because I had more "brain time" to recognize the longer letters. As the days passed, I could tolerate listening for longer periods of time and the rate at which I learned the character sounds seemed to increase. I think my brain was becoming more proficient at "thinking fast".

To make a long story short, in about eight weeks I was making solid copy of the five letter code groups and I could listen to one side of the record without tiring. I passed the 13 wpm code exam with ease. It seemed so slow compared with the 15 wpm records.

I didn't learn until about thirty years later that I had unwittingly used what I now refer to as a "superset" of the Koch CW learning method. The code practice record code groups contained all of the CW characters from the very beginning versus the Koch method of learning one new character at a time. Please note that the "superset" method that I was forced to use is not the method that I recommend. In fact I would caution: "Do not try this at home!"

The point I'm making here is that learning the CW characters by SOUND using the Koch method does indeed work! I know that the Koch method works because I unknowingly used it! I regret that I ever saw a visual table of dots and dashes or listened to slow code. Dits and Dahs are a relic of the past. Please forget that you ever saw or heard one. Concentrate on hearing the complete and unique SOUND of each character when sent at 15 to 20 wpm. Work at disengaging your conscious mind and using your subconscious mind to copy CW. Relax, close your eyes and put down your pencil. I like to visualize the CW characters "popping up" on my mental computer screen. At first, don't be concerned about maintaining the visual image of the string of characters you receive, just concentrate on visualizing each new character as your subconscious mind reveals it to you.

Practice this technique only when you are relaxed so you can engage your subconscious mind. When your brain tires of this exercise, STOP! You will eventually become accustomed to performing this exercise.

Think about this; the 15 - 20 wpm characters that you learn the SOUND of using the Koch method, will sound the same way when you are conducting a CW QSO on the air! How cool is that? What a concept!

Next time I will tell you about my "Ah Ha!" CW moment that made me realize that the subsconscious mind is involved in copying CW.

Until then, HPE CU SN ON CW! Ron, K5DUZ

We need YOU to make our Elmer project work. If you need help with any ham radio matter or are willing to help others with your expertise, please contact our Elmer director:
K5DUZ - **NAQCCSKED@FLASH.NET**

Also see Elmer Project on the web site.

5. RECENT AWARD AND PRIZE WINNERS:

CERTIFICATES:

1000 MPW
#0098 - KH6OZ - 1/3/11
#0099 - KH6OZ - 1/3/11
#0100 - KC2VBU - 1/3/11
#0101 - N8XMS - 1/26/11
#0102 - K0MDS - 2/8/11
#0103 - K0MDS - 2/8/11

Participation 2010
East - K3WWP, W2JEK, N8XMS (tie) - 1/1/11
West - NU7T - 1/1/11
VE/DX - VE3FUJ - 1/1/11
Free FISTS membership - N8XMS - 1/1/11

QSO-a-Day
Full year 2010 - K3WWP - 1/1/11

Alphabet Prefix - World
#0002 - G5CL - 2/3/11

ENDORSEMENTS and/or WEB SITE LISTINGS:

Friendship Club
1600 points - K3WWP - 1/8/11

Alphabet Prefix Honor Roll - World
436 prefixes - G5CL - 2/3/11

Suffix Words Honor Roll - SWA

218 words - K3WWP - 2/5/11

Suffix Words Honor Roll - SWA/GAIN
176 words - NU7T - 2/4/11

Nice to see our awards picking up. A couple months ago we had virtually none to list here. Hopefully the increase will continue as we get more into sunspot cycle 24 and improving band conditions.

Full List of all award winners here.

6. MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

This section is managed by Paul N8XMS and any questions about it should go to PAUL142857@GMAIL.COM. Paul selects members at random and asks them if they would like to be featured in the Member Spotlight in the newsletter.

Don Minkoff NK6A #4764

I was first licensed in 1959 (WV6HYF) as a 12 year old in junior high. A local HAM and neighbor (W6NQX, SK) got me interested. My rig was a Heathkit DX40 and Hallicrafters SX-99. Seven years later I got my General license (WA6IYK). I was in the Air Force at the time. I upgraded to Advanced in 1971 and Extra class in 1982. I discovered QRP in 1980. I built a HW-8 and had a lot of fun with 4 watts. I jumped into high power DXing for new ones and low power for everything else. I enjoy building and wanted to get back into QRP and a small rig to take camping and on trips. I built the Sierra with many band modules to use on camping trips and operating in the field. I also had an Argonaut 509 and later a 515. Sold those and found an HW-9 fully loaded. Now I have a K2, K1

and KX1 for operating QRP. I also built the SMK-1 and a few Rockmites.

I have operated from Hawaii with my K2 while on vacation and use it for QRP contesting. My favorite rig is the KX1. I take it with me on day hiking trips and vacations in the Canadian Rockies. A few years ago I operated QRP from a cruise ship in the Atlantic and down the St Lawrence seaway between Boston and Montreal. I made many DX contacts operating portable PA/MM with 3W. My most memorable contact was operating portable in Monterey, CA. standing by the side of the pool with a telescoping whip and ground wire thrown into the pool. I was chasing the QRP 20M FOX on a Thursday night. I worked K3ESE in MD.

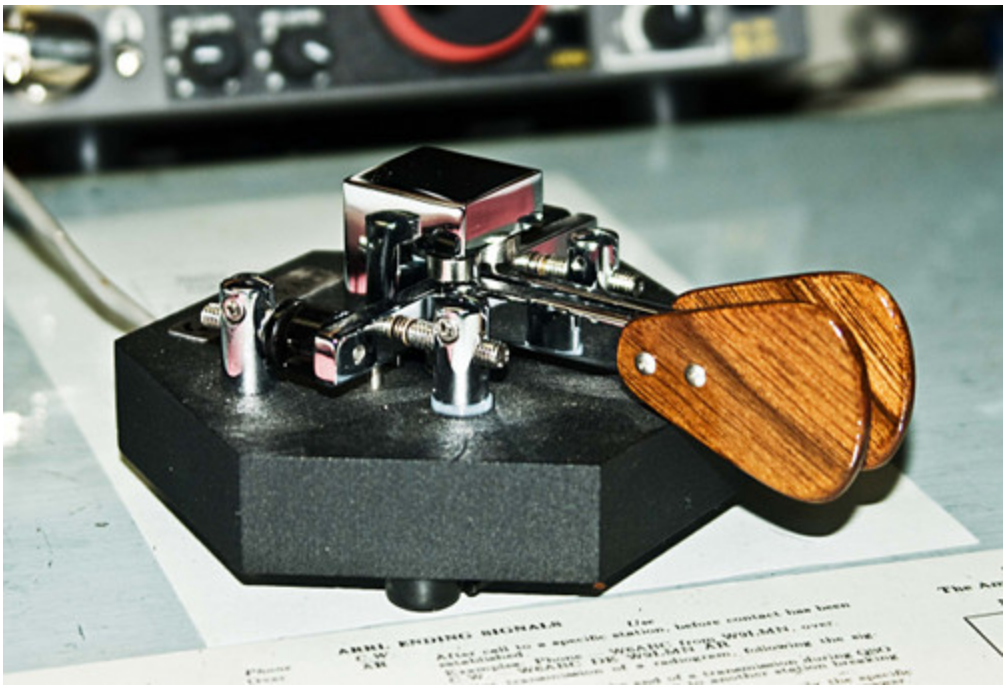
I recently retired from the auto industry (car audio and navigation) as a Quality Engineer and Auditor. I now have more time for chasing DX, building new radios or operating in contests. I can also be found in my kitchen cooking up a storm, playing the mandolin or banjo or riding around on my bicycle or motorcycle.

My current remodeled station consists of a K3 and K2 for most of my operating along with the K1 and KX1. I prefer the skill of operating QRP to my other QRO activities.

7. NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES BY OUR MEMBERS:

This section is a forum for you to tell other members what you've been up to on the ham bands or to submit an article dealing with some aspect of CW and QRP operation or equipment. Send your news items and articles to our news editor Paul KD2MX at **KD2MX@ARRL.NET**. Deadline for submitting news items for the next newsletter is February 3. For your convenience any links in this section will open in a new browser window so you can come immediately back here to the newsletter just by closing that extra window. DISCLAIMER: Any views expressed in this section are those of the member submitting them, and may or may not be those of the NAQCC or its officers.

- **From Bob K2GLS #4583 -** (Note: Bob was the winner in the December sprint entrants drawing and had this to say) Mike (KC2EGL), John (K3WWP), I wanted to let you know the Walnut Paddles arrived today and tonight they are on my hex key (see picture below). I think they give the key a nice touch of color. Thank you both and Gregg (WB8LZG) for your efforts with the monthly sprints and other activities. 73, Bob, K2GLS



- **From John K3WWP #0002 -** Two things made February a great month for me. I had a ball with our groundhog challenge. It was a lot more fun and... well, challenging as one of our participants said in his soapbox. Eliminating contest/sprint QSO's helped to make it that way. In fact it was so much fun, I'm attempting to do it twice. I completed the first round on February 16, and immediately started over again from scratch. I don't know if I'll finish the second one or not, but it adds fun to my daily operating to try to do so.

Secondly, my interest in contesting may have been reborn. I was looking forward to the ARRL DX contest, and I haven't really had that level of anticipation in a few years now. Noting the Solar Flux peaked at 125 a day or so before the contest helped solidify my anticipation. I'm not going to say a lot of specifics here because I've written a story about the contest for my web site. If you're interested in reading it, go to the contesting section and the contest stories page.

Summarizing briefly, it netted me 3 overall new countries to bring my QRP/CW simple wire antenna total to 212 worked now. Including those 3, I added 16 new band-countries of which 6 were on 80M to bring me to just under 50 on 80M now and overall close to 1,000 band-countries. Some exciting QSO's were working Hawaii 3 times on 80, West Kiribati on 40, and Cape Verde and Hawaii with 930 mW. Of the 144 overall QSO's, 62 came with my 930 mW power. I'm glad just a few days before the contest I altered my antenna tuner/switch to permit me to easily switch my RF attenuator in and out on all bands not just 160-30 as previously. That let me play with mW power on the higher bands in the contest. Well, enough said. I don't want to give away all the contents of the story here.

All comments on specific sections of the newsletter should go to the email address given in that section. Any other general comments go to:

NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET

The publication of our next newsletter will be announced via email to all members for whom we have a valid email address unless you specifically have unsubscribed from the email.

Past on-line newsletters beginning with issue #042 are now archived on the site. So if you missed seeing any past issues, you can check them out in the archives.

Unless otherwise credited, all items are written by K3WWP.

If you came directly to this newsletter, we invite you now to browse the NAQCC Web Site.